

Independent claim 55 recites features similar to those of claim 48, and, therefore, the rejection over claims 48 and 55 will be addressed together.

Unlike the inventions of claim 48 and 55, neither Meckley nor Fair, either by itself or in a reasonable combination with the other, teaches or suggests an upper row of jacks and a lower row of jacks, wherein each jack in the upper row is horizontally offset with respect to an adjacent jack in the lower row at least a distance of approximately a length of a jack.

The Office Action states on page 2 that it would have been obvious to increase the offset distances between the jacks of Meckley and Fair to arrive at the Applicant's invention because it is specifically stated in Meckley that "it is desirable to space or distance jacks from one another as much as possible to reduce crosstalk between the jacks." Applicants respectfully disagree with this position taken in the Office Action with respect to claims 48 and 55.

While Applicants agree that moving the conductors away from one another will lead to a reduction in crosstalk, Applicants do not agree that it would be obvious to space out the distances of the jacks as much as possible. The reduction in crosstalk is not the only criteria in designing telecommunications jack panels. Density in telecommunications is a concern that has to be dealt with in addition to reduction in crosstalk. This is highlighted in both Meckley's and Fair's disclosures. Although Applicants agree that it is specifically stated in Meckley that it is desirable to space or distance the contact or terminal members from one another as much as possible, it is also specifically stated in Meckley in column 2 lines 54-58 that "as the size of electronic components has become reduced with advances in semiconductor technology, it has become increasingly necessary to increase the number of modular connector ports which can be mounted in a given area. This statement also appears in the disclosure of Fair. Please see column 1, lines 53-57 of Fair. Thus, the concept of preserving high density of connectivity is explicitly and clearly highlighted by these two references and a large horizontal offset is clearly taught away from by these two references.

The above statement that appears in both the disclosures of Meckley and Fair explains the very reason that, even though both Meckley and Fair talk about the importance of distance in reducing crosstalk, neither Meckley nor Fair disclose a configuration that meets all of the criteria of the Applicant's inventions of claims 48 and 55. The above statement explains the reason why neither the Meckley reference nor the Fair reference, nor any other prior art reference of record,

shows a design wherein the jacks or the jack receptacles are offset at least a whole jack length, in not only in the vertical direction, but, also in the horizontal direction.

Although both Meckley and Fair disclose bi-level frame configurations, neither of them show the amount of horizontal offsetting disclosed by the applicants. Although Meckley refers to Fair's configuration in its disclosure, Fair's jacks are not even close to being offset by the amount contemplated by claims 48 and 55. In Fair, the adjacent jacks are kept close to vertically parallel, with just enough offset to make sure that a receptacle in the upper row is not completely overlapping a receptacle in the lower row. Please see column 4, lines 36-38 of Fair, where it is stated, "In other words, a plug aperture 200 in the upper row is not completely, directly, opposite any plug aperture 210 in the lower row."

For at least the reasons stated above, independent claim 48 and dependent claims 49-54 that depend from independent claim 48 and independent claim 55 and dependent claims 56-60 that depend from independent claim 55 are patentable over Meckley in view of Fair.

Regarding independent claim 61, claim 61 recites, among other things, a plurality of jacks forming subsets of adjacent jack pairs wherein the jacks of each adjacent jack pair are offset relative to each other in two directions, wherein they are offset at least a distance of approximately a length of a jack in both of the directions.

As discussed above with respect to independent claims 48 and 55, neither Meckley nor Fair, either by itself or in a reasonable combination with one another, teaches or suggests adjacent jack pairs wherein the jacks of each adjacent jack pair are offset relative to each other in two directions and offset at least a distance of approximately a length of a jack in both of the directions, as featured in claim 61. Moreover, as also discussed above, one of ordinary skill in the art would have had no motivation to modify the combination of Meckley and Fair to arrive at Applicants' invention of claim 61 due to the desire in the industry to maintain the high density of connectivity as specifically highlighted by both Meckley and Fair.

For at least the reasons stated above, independent claim 61 and dependent claims 62-67 that depend from independent claim 61 are patentable over Meckley in view of Fair.

The Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this rejection.

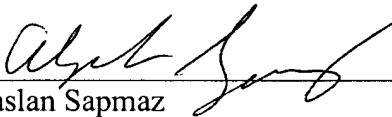
It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims is in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. Although certain arguments regarding

Serial No. 10/783,854
Group Art Unit: 2833

patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that the prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

Respectfully submitted,
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: November 20, 2006



Alpaslan Sapmaz
Reg. No. 58,911
AS/dc